

Homecoming finally ends flood ordeal

Ocean Shores couple return after \$100,000 reconstruction

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THE Ocean Shores flood has finally ended for Des and Molynda Boylan.

Mr and Mrs Boylan, both aged in their 80s, were among the scores of Ocean Shores residents evacuated when stormwater rushed across the region on June 30.

This week, after more than two months living in motels at Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby, the Boylans finally returned to their Narooma Drive home.

The delay in their return has been marked by a near-reconstruction of their house costing more than \$100,000.

And they are not alone.

Across the region, more than \$15 million is likely to be paid out by insurance companies to repair damage from the floods, according to the Insurance Council of Australia.

Millions more dollars are being handed out to councils and individuals by the State Government under its Natural Disaster Relief program.

A report by Byron Shire Council this week said the council had claimed more than \$1 million in disaster



FLOOD FLASHBACK: Des and Molynda Boylan with furnishings ruined in the flooding.

funding since the flood. That figure would likely double before work was finished.

The report to the council warned asset management staff remained 'stretched to the limits' as they worked to repair damage.

And Mr and Mrs Boylan are not the only ones to have been kept out of home by the floods for so long. They said one of their neighbours also returned home this week and another was still living in a caravan.

New Brighton Trading Post part-owner Larissa Clorley, who learned only last week that her shop would be covered by insurance, said she knew of at least one other person who not yet been able to return home.

Mr and Mrs Boylan said every wall in their house had to be replaced, along with their kitchen.

When builders ripped off skirting boards a few days after the flood receded, water poured from the walls. They then had to wait weeks for timber to dry before the new walls could be installed.

What upset them most was looters raiding their empty home, making off with tools from the couple's shed.

However, Mrs Boylan said they never despaired while living out of the Chateau Motel in Brunswick Heads and the Mullumbimby Hotel.

"There was so much to do," Mrs Boylan said.

"We just never thought about how long it would take to get back in. People would ask us why we were always laughing — but what's the good in not laughing?"

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